

Dear missionaries, managers and staff of primary healthcare centers in the missionary countries.

The most crucial source of information on what to do in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic are guidelines for national health departments. However, we know the relevant recommendations are not available everywhere and that they do not always meet your needs.

Therefore, we encourage you to read the COVID-19 Pandemic Prevention and Treatment Manual issued for Polish medical institutions based on experience in the fight against the COVID-19 epidemic in China, which, as we know, is being carried out by the Chinese services with success (the epidemic in China has been contained). The publication includes many valuable indications and information. It will certainly be difficult to apply them in small African clinics, but it is worthwhile to adapt the proposed measures to local conditions as much as possible. Do not be discouraged by the fact that you are unable to do everything, but try to adapt the global recommendations to your own capabilities. Below are some suggestions for these actions, which can be implemented even with very limited resources:

1) Educate the locals, but do not organize group meetings! Use text messages, Facebook and WhatsApp. Explain what the COVID-19 and SARS-CoV-2 are, and warn against panicking. Please tell about precautions.

2) Inform the local population not to visit a health center with mild flu-like symptoms (dry cough, a headache, muscle pain). In such cases recommend staying at home (isolation) and rest.

ATTENTION! Do not forget the risk of malaria, which remains a serious threat especially for young people. Every case of fever should be differentiated from malaria. This situation may require treatment of malaria without proper diagnosis towards it.

3) Arrange a waiting room in the health center so that individual patients can keep a distance of at least 2 meters. **Get the patients' families out of the waiting room.**

4) For people with COVID-19 suspicion, organize a separate waiting room and a separate office, preferably in a separate building away from the hospital or health center.

5) Have someone to work with you to carry out TRIAGE (segregation of patients according to their condition). Before a patient is placed in a waiting room, this person should determine whether the patient is in a risk group and should direct him or her to the right place.

6) Limit the length of consultations as much as possible. During the completion of documents and all the paperwork the patient does not have to be in the office!

7) Avoid hospitalization of patients as far as possible. Patients who have the SARS-CoV-2 virus must not remain with other patients who are not contaminated with the coronavirus. Patients with other diseases and ailments, especially those of the cardiovascular and respiratory systems, are at the greatest risk of dying from COVID-19.

8) Ban visits to the center. Isolate patients who remain in a health center. In those centers that do not provide meals to the sick, make sure the staff donates food prepared by the patients' families. All dishes should be thoroughly washed after the meal and disinfected.

9) In times of epidemics take special care of clinic staff. Doctors and the nurses should eat healthy. Outside of work, the staff of the health center should limit contact with other people. **Medical personnel must be protected.** They should wear masks and gloves and keep a distance from patients, and other health care workers, if possible.

10) Inform staff that the clothes they work in should be washed (separately from clothes worn outside the center) and ironed daily.

11) Wear protective gloves for each patient and change them after each patient. Remember to wash and disinfect your hands frequently. Remember that the gloves can also be washed with disinfectant and dried. Facial masks can be sterilized in an autoclave. The hand disinfectant can be prepared by you. In accordance with WHO recommendation use:

- 833 ml 96% ethyl alcohol (spirit),
- 110 ml of water distilled or cooled after boiling,
- 42 ml of 3% peroxide water,
- 15 ml 98% glycerol (or glycerin),
- a screw-on container with a capacity of just over 1 litre.

12) Ensure that all surfaces in the health center are frequently and thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Use ethyl alcohol (min. 70% of concentration) to disinfect.

13) Frequently ventilate all rooms in the health center.

14) COVID-19 is a viral disease. Therefore, the use of antibiotics is not recommended in its mild course. Keep an eye on the guidelines for drugs used in COVID-19 therapy and watch out for their interactions with other drugs.

Please make comments and suggestions. We want to create a forum to share your experience of combating the COVID-19 epidemic in mission countries. Please contact us. We must support each other, together we will achieve more!

Stay healthy!

With heartfelt greetings,

Employees and Volunteers

Humanitarian Aid Foundation

Redemptoris Missio

Developed by:

Jacek Jarosz, MA

Redemptoris Missio Humanitarian Aid Foundation

tel. +48 609 210 184

Email: medicus@ump.edu.pl

Consultation:

Dr. Norbert Rehlis, med.

Chairman of the Council of the Humanitarian Aid Foundation Redemptoris Missio

Dr. Mateusz Cofta

International Health Laboratory, Chair and Department of Health Prevention Karol Marcinkowski Medical University in Poznań